

Nicolas de Montreux's *La Sophonisbe* (1601): An English Translation of Act IV

An Honors Thesis (FR 498)

by

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Abstract

It is a human desire – or perhaps it is better to say, necessity – to recite and consume stories. Stories are more than just a form of entertainment: they are vessels for human histories. The lack of a universal language, however, has severely impeded the dispersal and preservation of those histories. Stories tell how we learned to create fire, form communities, and keep the memories of ancient heroes and heroines alive. The early seventeenth-century tragedy by French playwright Nicolas de Montreux, *La Sophonisbe*, as it is transcribed in the Stone edition, is one such tale. While the translation of the play's fourth act was undertaken alone, it was later reviewed and refined among a group of peers and like-minded scholars who were working to translate the remaining acts. I endeavor in the translation of Act IV to continue the telling of the tragic tale that de Montreux set to paper over four hundred years ago, recounting the fall from grace of a respected military leader and politician, and the death sentence that awaits his beautiful bride, Sophonisba.

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Introduction

I found the retelling of the tragic tale of Sophonisba, the titular Carthaginian noblewoman, in Nicolas de Montreux's play of relevant historical significance. Now, for the first time, an English rendition of this early seventeenth-century drama will be available to a new group of literary consumers. The aim of this thesis was to produce the first English translation of de Montreux's play. A group of dedicated scholars worked together to produce a full translation of the drama, but my own work centered specifically on translating Act IV. While accuracy and faithfulness to the original French text were at times overarching goals for this rendering, readability – and thus, accessibility – for a modern English audience was a constant focus.

I found the process of translating Donald Stone, Jr.'s transcription of *La Sophonisbe* particularly challenging. My primary experience with translating literary works came from more modern pieces of simple poetry. Tackling a project of this scope was daunting at first, but I began to find a pattern in de Montreux's writing, which made translating the work from early seventeenth-century French to modern English easier. Additional help came through the use of Randle Cotgrave's 1611 dictionary. I must admit, however, that even it failed at points to offer usable suggestions. There were words such as *pallir*, *ravisser*, and *chetif* that continually plagued me throughout my work, but I found methods to overcome this obstacle.

Language is a constantly transforming creature. As such, it allows writers slightly more freedom when crafting their works. I readily used this freedom – we can call it “poetic license” – to help transition Act IV of *La Sophonisbe* to a modern English version. In particular, the French word *vif* was especially elusive in conveying a suitable meaning in English. Normally, it would be translated directly to something along the lines of *bright*, *quick*, or *sharp*. Often, however, these possible translations did not fit the context of the scene. Using a thesaurus, the Oxford English Dictionary, and some poetic license, I was able to rework the word into the scenic context, with some translations including *brilliant*, *ready*, and *fierce*.

Taking on the first translation of any work, creative or otherwise, is no small task. Translating Nicolas de Montreux's *La Sophonisbe* was no exception. Between confusing and often elusive syntax that, while intelligible

and elegant to an early seventeenth-century French spectator or reader, eludes comprehension and appreciation to modern-day Americans, and possible grammatical errors in Stone's edition rendered additional challenges. It is, however, all the more rewarding to know that another piece of cultural and artistic history may now join the pantheon of works available to English-speaking scholars and artists.

Works Cited

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ACTE IIII

SCIPION, SIPHAX, CURTIUS, SOPHONISBE

[Scipion, Siphax]

SCIPION

Pour se faire adorer, pour remplir de creance
 Les esprits des mortels d'une vive puissance,
 D'une sainte equité, vuide de passion,
 Les dieux ont seuls retins l'alme perfection,
 Seuls l'entiere vertu incoupable du vice,
 Et tous seuls la grandeur de la sainte justice,
 Delaissans aux mortels un esprit plain d'erreur
 Qui se laisse emporter à l'ardante fureur,
 Un pechable desir, une volonté prompte
 De commettre peché sans en pallir de honte.
 Ainsi nul n'a vescu en ses œuvres parfait,
 Et nul ne vit encor impollu de forfait.
 Nul ne regne incoupable, et la fiere tempeste
 Ne peut rouller dessus une incoupable teste.
 Le ciel, ouvrage saint de la dextre des dieux,
 Porte le chaud, le froid, et tousjours chaleureux,
 Il ne rit à nostre œil ; souvent il enfarine
 Nos chefs de froide neige et nos yeux de bruine.
 Ores chaud, ores froid, ore laid, ores beau,
 Il nous fait approcher du sepulcral tombeau,
 Car il use nos jours, et chaque pas nous maine
 Au sejour tenebreux de la mort inhumaine.
 De mesme, des mortels, dont l'esprit desloyal

ACTE IV

SCIPIO, SIPHAX, CURTIUS, SOPHONISBE

[Scipio, Siphax]

SCIPIO

To be worshipped, to fill with faith
 Mortal spirits with a brilliant power,
 With holy justice, devoid of passion,
 The gods above have retained propitious perfection,
 They alone have retained all virtue, blameless of vice,
 And they alone have retained the greatness of holy justice,
 Abandoning to mortals a spirit filled with error
 Which allows itself to be carried away to zealous fury,
 A sinful desire, a keen willingness
 To commit sin without blanching from shame.
 Therefore no one has lived a perfect life,
 And no one yet lives untainted of sin.
 No one reigns blameless, and the proud tempest
 Cannot overturn an innocent head.
 The sky, heavenly work of divine hand,
 Brings heat, cold, and always warmth,
 It does not laugh in our face; often it whitens
 Our heads with freezing snow and our eyes with mist.
 Now hot, now cold, now ugly, now beautiful,
 It has us draw near the burial tomb,
 For it uses up our days, and each step leads us
 To the dark abode of inhuman death.
 Similarly, mortals, whose disloyal spirit

Enfante mille maux, sort le bien et le mal,
 Le vice et la vertu, et nul n'a cognoissance
 Queⁱ les dieux immortels, de la vraye innocence.
 Chacun a quelque vice et peché en quelque fait
 Qui trouble son repos et sa gloire defait.
 Nul ne reste incoupable, et de chacun la vie
 Est à quelque peché vivement asservie.
 Je le sens aujourd'huy ; aujourd'huy je le voy,
 Et ce cruel effet amplement j'apperçoy.
 Le voyant, je fremis d'une mortelle crainte
 Que nostre gloire soit par ce malheur estainte.
 La neige esteint le feu, et le vent, le flambeau.
 Ainsi le crime met nostre honneur au tombeau,
 Esteint nostre vertu. Son infame memoire
 Dans ^{la}elle ensevelist nostre divine gloire.
 Je le voy, je le sens et crains de ce forfait,
 Cruel à nostre honneur, le dangereux effet.
 Je crains que Massinisse, apres tant de services
 Qu'il a fait aux Romains, s'abisme dans ces vices,
 Et qu'il perde l'honneur de ses antiques faits,
 En l'infame fureur des infames forfaits.
 «Le vif commencement ne parfait pas l'ouvrage.
 «La fin tant seulement requiert cet avantage,
 «Et l'on ne peut juger que par la sainte fin
 «De la riche beauté de quelque œuvre divin,
 «Car le vice intervient. Quelque faute y prend vie
 Qui tout l'œuvre ternist d'une honte asservie.
 Et quoy donc, Massinisse, est-il possible, ô dieux,

Begets a thousand ills, brings out good and bad,
 Sin and virtue, and no one is aware
 Of true innocence, except the immortal gods.
 Everyone has some vice and sin of some sort
 Which disturbs one's peace and destroys his glory.
 No one remains blameless, and everyone's life
 Is firmly enchained by some sin.
 I feel it today; today I see it,
 And I fully perceive this cruel effect.
 Seeing it, I shudder with mortal fear
 That our glory may be extinguished by this misfortune.
 Snow quenches fire, and wind, the torch.
 Thus crime places our honor in the tomb,
 Extinguishing our virtue. Its infamous memory
 In itself shrouds our divine glory.
 I see it, I feel it, and fear the dangerous
 Consequence of this crime, ruthless to our honor.
 I fear that Massinissa, after all the service that
 He has done for the Romans, is plunged into these vices,
 And that he loses the honor of his ancient deeds,
 Through the monstrous fury of villainous crimes.
 "Ready beginning does not bring the work to completion.
 "The ending only requires that advantage,
 "And one can judge only by the holy outcome
 "Of the rich beauty of some divine work,
 "For sin intervenes. Some fault springs to life there
 That casts a stain on every work enslaved by shame.
 And what then, Massinissa, is it possible, oh gods,

ⁱⁱⁱQue toy qui fus jadis des rois victorieux,
 Compagnon des Romains parmy eux on estime
 De brave et de parfait, sois vaincu par le crime,
 Surmonté par le vice, et qu'un infame amour

 Te ravisse l'honneur et la force en un jour ?
 Veux-tu quitter la gloire et pour suivre une femme
 Contraire à ta vertu deshonor ton ame ?
 Pour cherir Sophonisbe et pour estre jaloux
 De sa folle amitié seras-tu contre nous ?
 Quoy, nous veux-tu quitter, nous manquer de parole,
 De foy et d'amitié pour suivre une amour folle,
 Te perdant en ses laqs et te laissant ravir
 Follement à toy-mesme afin de la servir ?
 O peste des mortels que la beauté mortelle ;
 Elle rend leur vertu miserable comme elle,
 Enerve la vigueur des esprits les plus forts
 Ainsi que la douleur deffait celle du corps !
 O malheur dommageable ! O cruel adversaire
 Du repos des mortels ! O meurdrier sanguinaire
 De leur antique honneur ! Demetrio^{iv} perdit
 Par les femmes l'honneur et chetif se rendit.
 Briséis^v autrefois d'Agamemnon aimée,
 Des Gregeois aguerris pensa perdre l'armée,
 Semant le chaud discord entre deux rois hautains
 Qui penserent cent fois se tuer inhumains.
 Pour aimer Polyxene^{vi} et la chercher à femme,
 Achille fut privé de sentiment et d'ame,

That you, who once was victorious over kings,
 Friend to the Romans (you are esteemed among them
 Brave and perfect),^{bxi} is it possible that you be vanquished by
 crime,
 Overcome by sin, and is it possible that a nefarious love
 Snatches your honor and strength in a single day?
 Do you wish to abandon glory and to follow a woman,
 Contrary to your virtue, to dishonor your soul?
 Will you be against us in order to cherish Sophonisba
 And to be jealous of her mad devotion?
 What, do you wish to abandon us, to forgo our word of honor,
 Loyalty and friendship to follow an mad love,
 Losing yourself in her snares and letting yourself delight
 Madly in order to serve her?
 Oh deadly plague that is mortal beauty;
 It makes their virtue miserable like her,
 Upsetting the power of the strongest spirit
 As pain wrecks the body's!
 Oh ruinous curse! O cruel enemy
 Of mortal peace! Oh bloodthirsty murderer
 Of their ancient honor! Demetrius lost
 His honor to these women and was made wretched.
 Briseis once beloved by Agamemnon,
 Intended to bring to perdition the army of warring Greeks,
 Sowing heated discord between two haughty kings
 Who, barbaric, intended to kill each other one hundred times.
 Loving Polyxena and looking to marry her,
 Achilles was deprived of feeling and soul,

Et l'amour de Cassandre^{vii}, agreable aux grans dieux,
Fist perir dans la mer Ajax le furieux.

O sexe dommageable ! O divin Alexandre,^{viii}
Qui ne peux te laisser ^{ix}à ses appasts surprendre,
Qui vainquis ton ardeur, mesprisant leurs esbats
Ainsi que tu vainquis les Perses aux combat.

Quels malheurs, quels tourmens, et quelle vive peine
Aux mortels apporta la desloyale Heleine* !

Combien fist-elle espandre et de sang et de pleurs
Et sentir aux mortels de cruelles douleurs !

O sexe miserable, ô pauvre Massinisse !

Si tu fais ores joug à sa fiere malice,
Pauvre prince perdu, tu verras enterrer

Avecque ton repos ce qui fist honorer
Ton antique vertu et ta gloire, asservie
Au pasle deshonneur, comme ta triste vie.

Quoy, te veux-tu bander ? Veux-tu souiller tes mains
Dans le sang genereux des invaincus Romains,

Attirer le malheur, la misere, et la guerre

Sur le sein belliqueux de ta natalle terre

Pour deffendre une femme et volant l'equité,

Honorer malgré nous son infame beauté ?

Seray-je donc forcé^{xi} par ton outrecuidance

De ravir de tes mains, à vive violence,

Par le fer et le sang ce que juste tu dois

Nous remettre ce jour pour obeir aux lois ?

Veux-tu briser le droit, violer la justice,

Et rendre la raison esclave de son vice ?

And the love of Cassandra, agreeable to the great gods,
Caused Ajax the angry to perish in the sea.

Oh ruinous sex! Oh divine Alexander,
Who cannot allow yourself to be surprised by her temptations,
You who vanquished your fervor, scorning their antics
As you conquered the Persians in battle.

What misfortunes, what miseries, and what sharp pain
Brought disloyal Helen to mortals!

How much blood and tears did she spill
And inflict cruel pains upon mortals!

Oh miserable sex, o poor Massinissa!

If you now suppress her proud malice,
Poor lost prince, you will see buried

With your peace what brought honor
To your ancient virtue and your glory, enslaved
To wan dishonor, like your sad life.

What, do you wish to be bound? Do you wish to soil your hands
In the noble blood of unconquered Romans?

Do you wish to bring about misfortune, misery, and war

On the bellicose breast of your homeland

To defend a woman, and, robbing justice,

To honor her infamous beauty in spite of us?

Shall I then be forced by your presumptuousness

To snatch from your hands, with forceful violence,

By blade and blood what you must justly

Surrender to us today in order to obey the law?

Do you wish to break the law, to violate justice,

And to make reason a slave to his sin?

^{xii}Luy veux-tu plus donner de vive autorité
 Sur tes faits, sur tes ans qu'à la juste equité ?
 Quoy, nous veux-tu ravir Sophonisbe, ordonnee
 Pour estre dedans Rome en triomphe menee,
 Comme esclave conquise, et qui nous appartient
 Par le pouvoir de Mars qui nostre droit maintient ?
 Or sus, il faut la rendre ou quitter l'alliance
 Des Romains, deffenseurs de sa vive puissance,
 Avoir pour ennemy leur pouvoir indomté
 Et perdre en combatant ta chere liberté,
^{xiii}Sa vie, et ton honneur, car avant que je sente
 Des plus cruelles morts la mort plus^{xiv} violente,
 Qu'il me soit reproché de n'avoir retenu
 L'honneur à nostre empire et son droit soustenu.
 «Qui trahist sa patrie et ne deffend fidelle
 «Contre ses^{xv} ennemis sa^{xvi} guerriere querelle,
 «Qui ne garde son^{xvii} bien et ne deffend son^{xviii} los
 «N'est digne de l'avoir pour sepulcre à ses os,
 «Puisqu'ayans^{xix} receu d'elle et l'honneur et la vie,
 «Elle doit de ces biens estre de nous^{xx} servie,
 «Que^{xxi} nos jours luy sont deuz et nostre sang promis
 «Avec l'heureux butin des cruels ennemis.

SIPHAX

Quoy donc, ô pauvre roy, ô prince miserable,
 Apres avoir servi de sujet lamentable
 A l'injuste fortune et apres que le sort
 A rendu ton espoir miserablement mort,

Do you want to give him more forceful power
 Over your actions, over your years rather than in just fairness?
 What, do you want us to seize Sophonisba, ordered
 To be led triumphantly into Rome,
 Like a conquered slave, and who belongs to us
 By the power of Mars who upholds our right?
 Well then, you must relinquish her or end the alliance
 With the Romans, defenders of her great power;
 You must have their untamed power as an enemy
 And must lose in battle your cherished liberty,
 Her life, and your honor; for, before I feel
 The most violent death of cruelest deaths,
 May I be accused for not having maintained
 The honor of our empire and for not having upheld its law.
 "He who betrays his homeland and does not faithfully defend
 "Its warring battles against its enemies,
 "He who does not protect his nation's wellbeing and does not
 defend its glory
 "Is not worthy to have for a tomb his own bones,
 "Since, having received from her both honor and life,
 "She must be served by us with these virtues,
 "Since our days are owed to her and our blood is sworn
 "With the proud fortune of cruel enemies.

SIPHAX

What then, oh poor king, oh miserable prince,
 After having served as the wretched subject
 Of unjust destiny, and after fate
 Has made your hope sorrowfully dead,

Dois-tu servir encor de fable^{xxii} et de risée
 A la tourbe Romaine, inhumaine, insensee,
 Furieuse, cruelle, adversaire des rois,
 Pour avoir^{xxiii} en horreur le juste joug des loix ?
 Quoy donc, seras-tu serf d'un cruel populaire
 Qui tire son repos de ta dure misere ?
 Te verras-tu chetif, en triomphe trainer,

 Toy qui soulois les roys invaincus gouverner,
 Tr[i]ompher^{xxiv} de leur gloire et sous ta dextre forte

 Asseurer leur pouvoir et leur audace morte ?
 Et quoy donc, tu verras les liens inhumains
 Entortiller tes bras et tes royales mains,
^{xxv}Ses fers cruels, tes pieds et ton ame insensee,
 De mille desespoirs horriblement forcee ?
 Quoy, tu le verras donc et encor d'un mesme œil,
 Ton plus antique honneur gisant dans le cercueil ?
 Tu le verras, Siphax, pour ressentir encore
 Plus aspre ta douleur qui fiere te devore.
^{xxvi}Tu le verras, Siphax, et le voyant, tes jours
 Au pouvoir de la mort sans espoir de secours.
 Tu le verras, Siphax, et l'ardeur assouvie
 Des superbes Romains, envieux de ta vie.
 Tu le verras, Siphax ; non feras, car la mort
 Peut destourner de toy un si funeste sort.
 «Aux princes et aux roys l'empire est necessaire,
 «Puisque pour commander le soleil leur esclairer,

Must you still use tales and mockery
 To the Roman rabble, inhuman, incensed,
 Furious, cruel, rival of kings,
 In order to maintain, in dread, the just yoke of the laws?
 What then, will you be a slave of a cruel people
 Which takes its pleasure from your harsh misery?
 Will you see yourself of little force and importance, being
 drawn in triumph,

 You who were accustomed to governing undefeated kings,
 To triumphing over their glory and, through your strong right
 hand,
 Guaranteeing death to their power and their presumption?
 And what then, will you see the savage shackles
 Twisting your arms and your royal hands,
 Their cruel arms twisting your feet and your raging soul,
 Horribly constrained by a thousand torments?
 What, will you therefore see and, still, with a similar eye,
 Your most ancient honor lying in a coffin?
 You will see, Siphax, in order to feel still
 More bitterly your pain, which proudly devours you.
 You will see, Siphax, and in so seeing, you will see your life
 In the hands of death without hope of rescue.
 So will you see, Siphax, the assuaged ardor
 Of haughty Romans, envious of your life.
 So will you see, Siphax; you will not act, for death
 Can divert you from such a disastrous fate.
 "Empire is necessary to princes and kings,
 "Since, in order to command the sun to illuminate them,

«Puisque rois ils sont nez et faits pour estre tels
 «^{xxvii}Ou la mort qui les met au rang des immortels,
 «Car de vivre ^{xxviii}privez ce leur est chose vile,
 «Puisqu'ils ne sont pas faits de nature servile,
 «Et plus douce est la mort que le vivre asservy
 «A qui l'on a la gloire et le repos ravy,
 «Et qui ^{xxix}nous est laissé du ^{xxx}cruel adversaire
 «Plustost pour chastiment que pour bien salulaire.
 «Les roys n'ont autre but que l'empire ou la mort,
 «Puisqu'ils ne sont sujets à ce vulgaire sort
 «Qui retient des mortels la nature affoiblie
 «En espoir languissant d'une plus douce vie.
 «Faut mourir ou regner ^{xxxi}afin de n'estre point
 «D'implorer un vaincu cruellement contraint,
 «Pour n'estre de la vie à cetuy redevable
 «Que nous avons voulu rendre un jour miserable,
 «Mesprisé, detesté et dont l'orgueilleux flanc,
 «Pour se voir offencé, respire nostre sang.
 Ne faut-il aussi bien abandonner la vie,
^{xxxi}Puisque nous sommes nez pour en paistre l'envie
 «De la cruelle sœur, et celui qui dispos
 «S'invite promptement s'oblige le repos.
 Sus, donc, il faut mourir, ô Siphax miserable,
 Qui esprouves du sort la nature muable,
 L'inconstance et le cours et qui te vis heureux,
 Puis par un sort contraire, esclave malheureux.
 O dieux, si vous avez souci de la justice,

"Since kings are born and created to be such beings
 "Or death which places them among the ranks immortals,
 "For to live deprived of empire is a vile thing to them
 "Since they are not created to be of servile nature,
 "And death is sweeter than to live enslaved
 "To whom one has snatched both the glory and peace,
 "And which is given to us by the cruel enemy
 "Rather as punishment than as a beneficial good.
 "Kings have no other aim than empire or death,
 "Since they are not subject to this common fate
 "Which keeps the weakened nature of mortals,
 "Languishing in hope for a sweeter life.
 "It is necessary to die or to reign in order not to be
 "Defeated, cruelly compelled to beg,
 "In order not to be indebted for the life of this man
 "Whom we have wanted to give a wretched day,
 "Despised, hated and whose proud flank,
 "In order not to be offended, breathes our blood.
 Must we not also indeed abandon life,
 Since we were born to feed on envy
 "Of the cruel sister, and he who, so disposed,
 "Is promptly invited for us to be at rest.
 Onward, then, we must die, oh wretched Siphax,
 You who feel the mutable nature of fate,
 Inconstancy and the journey and who saw yourself happy,
 Then, through a twist of opposing fate, you saw yourself as a
 wretched slave.
 Oh gods, if you have concern for justice,

Si vous tenez encor pour ennemy le vice,
 Si vous avez soucy des equitables lois,
 Et ^{xxxiii}pour vous ressembler, des redoutables rois,
 Vangez, vangez mon sang, vangez ma vie esteinte.

Escoutez mes raisons et la juste complainte
 Que je fais contre Rome et qui force mon bras
 De luy-mesme avancer mon furieux trespas.
 Rome, cruelle Rome, ingrate, ambitieuse,
 Qui paist du sang royal son ame furieuse,
 Rome, plaine de crime et dont l'impieté
 Profane horriblement vostre divinité.
 O grands dieux, vangez-moy, et que mon corps ne
 Sans se sentir vangé dans la profonde tomb. [tombe
 Immortels, vangez-moy, puisque l'injuste sort
 Ne me laisse à ce faire un pouvoir assez fort.
 Si le sang respandu du commun populace
 Qui n'ose des grands dieux voir la divine face
 Doit se sentir vangé, celui des roys parfaits,
 Par un fer ennemy cruellement deffaits,
 Sera bien plus vangé, puisqu'à Jupin^{xxxiv} semblables,
 Ils portent comme leur^{xxxv} les faces venerables.
 Grans dieux, vangez-moy donc et ne permettez
 Que sans estre vangé je sente le trespas, [pas]
 Pour ne voir^{xxxvi} mespriser vostre sainte puissance
 Par les crimes commis sans en prendre vangeance,
 «Car rien ne nous dispence au crime desloyal,
 «Que le defaut de peine à corriger le mal.

If you still hold vice as an enemy,
 If you care about just laws,
 And because they resemble you, dreadful kings,
 Avenge, avenge my blood, avenge my life that has been
 extinguished.
 Hear my reasons and the rightful objection
 That I make against Rome, and which forces my very arm
 To speed my hastening death.
 Rome, cruel Rome, ungrateful, ambitious,
 Which feeds on its mad soul with royal blood,
 Rome, full of crime and whose wickedness
 Horribly defiles your divinity.
 Oh great gods, avenge me, and may my body, without
 Knowing vengeance, not fall into the depths of the tomb.
 Immortals, avenge me, since unjust fate
 Does not allow me to exercise sufficient strength.
 If the spilled blood of the common people
 Who do not dare to see the divine face of the great gods
 Must feel avenged, the blood of perfect kings,
 Cruelly defeated by an enemy sword,
 It will be even more avenged, since similar to Jupiter,
 They bear venerable visages like their people.
 Thus, great gods, avenge me and do not allow
 Me, without being avenged, to feel death,
 So that you do not see your holy power despised
 For crimes committed without taking revenge,
 "For nothing frees us from disloyal crime,
 "Like the punishment to right the wrong.

^{xxxvii}Or sus, donc, que ce fer qui seulement te reste

Marque de ton pouvoir apres ta douce perte

Affranchisse ton corps des liens inhumains

Dont l'on veut enchaîner tes miserables mains.

Sus, meurs de^{xxxviii} ton vouloir, sans que l'injuste force

D'un peuple furieux à ce malheur te force.

Descens donc, ô Siphax ; ô Siphax, roule donc

Par ce coup outrageux dans l'enfer plus^{xxxix} profond.

SCIPION

O roy, que veux-tu faire, et quelle estrange rage

Offusque ta raison et trouble ton courage ?

Pourquoy veux-tu mourir ?

SIPHAX

Pour ne mourir deux fois

De regret et douleur sous vos cruelles loix.

SCIPION

D'un courage affoibly et d'une ame paoureuse

Nous voyons les effets par leur mort furieuse.

Elle tesmoigne assez qu'ils n'ont pas le pouvoir

De resister au mal qui trouble leur espoir,

Puisque pour luy ceder, ils cedent à l'envie

Que le ciel rigoureux a de leur foible vie.

Ils semblent au vaincu qui par faute de cœur

A combatre hardy encontre son vainqueur

Luy cede son honneur et pour depouille sainte

Sa gloire qui trespasse en sa valeur esteinte.

Ainsi ceux que le sort travaille pour un temps,

Onward then, may this sword that is all that remains to you

Mark your power after your modest loss,

May free your body from the barbarous links

Whose wretched hands one wishes to enchain.

So be it; die by your own will, without unjust force

Of a furious people driving you to this misfortune.

Descend therefore, oh Siphax; oh Siphax, journey therefore

By this outrageous blow into the deepest hell.

SCIPIO

Oh king, what do you wish to do, and what strange passion

Offends your reason and disturbs your courage?

Why do you wish to die?

SIPHAX

So that I may not die twice

From regret and pain under your cruel laws.

SCIPIO

With weakened courage and a fearful soul

We see the effects of their mad death.

It attests enough that they do not have the power

To resist the evil which troubles their spirit,

Since by giving into it, they give into the envy

That the brutal heavens have over their feeble life.

They seem to the conquered who, through lack of courage

To boldly fight against his conqueror,

Yields his honor and, for saintly spoils,

His glory that leaves this world in its spent valor.

Thus, those for whom fate works for a time,

Qui pour luy resister ne sont assez puissans,
 S'en courent à la mort pour n'avoir pas^{xl} l'audace
 De combatre le mal qui cruel les menace.
 Mais les esprits hautains qui mesprisent le sort
 Ne cherchent le secours de la facile mort,
 Ains se mocquans du mal et d'un masle courage
 Supportans les efforts de sa cruelle rage,
 Attendent que le ciel releve leur bonheur,
^{xli}Comme victorieux sont capables d'honneur,
 Puisqu'ils ne sont vaincus et que^{xlii} parmy leur perte,
 Cruelle pour un temps, le courage leur reste,
 «Car celuy seullement^{xliii} se peut dire domté
 «Qui faute de valeur cede de volonté
^{xliv}«Qui n'est forcé du sort, puisqu'il a resistance
 «Que l'on fait au malheur, de son joug nous dispence.
 Fais paroistre, Siphax, en forçant le malheur,
 Que pour porter^{xlv} tousjours indomtable le cœur,
 Le courage assuré et l'assurance forte
 Contre l'ardeur du mal qui cruel te transporte,
 Que^{xlvi} tu merite encor ce nom sacré de roy
 Et de prescrire encor à ton peuple la loy.
 «Quite ce fer mortel ; c'est acte de furie
 «Quand de son propre fer soy-mesme on injurie,
 «Et nul n'est à priser qui paroist à nos yeux,
 «Offencez de le voir, contre luy^{xlvii} furieux,
 «Car il n'est de fureur^{xlviii} capable de prudence,

Who are not strong enough to resist him,
 Run away towards death for not having the boldness
 To fight the evil which cruelly threatens them.
 But the haughty spirits that despise fate
 Do not seek the refuge of an easy death,
 But rather, mocking evil and, with manly courage,
 Enduring the efforts of his cruel rage,
 They await the heavens to uplift their happiness,
 And, victorious, are worthy of honor,
 Since they are undefeated and since amidst their loss,
 Cruel for a time, their courage remains,
 "So that it can only be said to be tamed
 "By him who, through lack of valor, relinquishes control of
 "Him who is not forced by fate, since he has the capability to
 resist
 "That which is made by misfortune, he pardons us from the
 yoke of fate.
 So have it appear, Siphax, in bringing about misfortune,
 That because you always carry an indomitable heart,
 Bold courage and strong confidence
 Against the malicious fervor which cruelly moves you,
 Because you still merit the sacred title of king
 And still dictate law to your people.
 "Forsake this mortal sword; it is an act of madness
 "When one's own sword injures oneself,
 "And there is no prize which appears before our eyes,
 "Offensive to see, angry with himself,
 "For it is not because of the fury capable of caution,

«Et l'ardante fureur nostre repos offence.
 Or sus, ne pers donc pas avecque le repos
 Que le sort t'a ravy le perdurable los.
 «Ne pers ton vif honneur ; la peine nous fait estre
 «Caressez de l'honneur et genereux paroistre,
 «Puisqu'elle donne jour à la vertu qui fait
 «Honorer nostre nom comme saint et parfait.
 Parois donc vertueux et fais que l'on n'estime
 Que le sort ait vaincu ton ame magnanime,
 Mais que plustost, vainqueur du destin et du sort
 Afin de les forcer, tu mesprise la mort.
 Attens, Siphax, attens, car autant on renomme
 Par sa sainte douceur nostre celebre Rome,
 Que pour tant de combats où sa vive valeur
 Parust victorieuse en despit du malheur.
 Elle est autant courtoise et riche de clemence
 Que parmy les combats esprise de vaillance.
 Elle te pourra rendre et ton estat de roy
 Et comme son amy avoir souci de toy.
 Je t'y feray secours, et ma foy je t'en donne
 Qui malgré le destin eternelle fleuronne.
 «Arreste donc ta main ; les chetifs malheureux
 «Ne peuvent esperer qu'un changement en mieux.

SIPHAX

O vaillant Scipion, ce qu'un peuple implacable,
 Different en humeur, en vouloir dissemblable,
 Regist insolemment ne se gouverne pas
 Par la sainte raison exempte du trespas,

"And the fierce anger that offends our peace.
 Now onward, do not therefore lose the peace
 Which fate has snatched enduring promises from you.
 "Do not waste your radiant honor; pain leaves us
 "Cherishing your honor and noble bearing,
 "Since it gives light to the virtue which
 "Dignifies our name as saintly and perfect.
 Therefore appear virtuous, and do not be esteemed
 By the fate that has defeated your magnanimous soul,
 But rather, victor over destiny and over fate
 In order to subdue them, you disdain death.
 Stay, Siphax, stay, so much is our revered Rome
 Renowned through its holy kindness,
 That for so many battles where its great worth
 Appeared victorious in spite of misfortune.
 She is so courteous and full of mercy
 That in her combat, she is seized by valor.
 She will restore you and your status as king
 And, as her friend, will have concern for you.
 I will save you, and my faith I give to you
 That in spite of destiny, she eternally flourishes.
 "Therefore hold back your hand; the miserable wretches
 "Cannot expect a change for the better.

SIPHAX

Oh valiant Scipio, what a relentless people,
 Different in mood, unlike in their desires,
 Insolently ruled, is not not governed
 By holy reason freed from death,

Par l'honneur, par le droit, ains par la violence
 Qui ne reçoit du frein à l'ardeur qui l'eslance,
 Ainsi que le nocher en son navire enclos
 En courant sur la mer ne maîtrise les flos
 Furieux, agitez du^{xlii} vent qui les maîtrise,
 Et qui leur fiere rage insolemment attise.
 Ainsi nul assez fort ne peut se faire voir
 Pour brider d'un public l'audacieux pouvoir,
 Insolent, effronté qui ne reçoit pour bride
 Que la vive fureur qui follement le guide.
 Plus juste, plus courtois, et plus doux mille fois
 Aux mortels opressez est l'empire des rois,
 Car il n'est traversé de l'orgueilleuse bande
 De mutins animez, puisqu'un seul y commande
 Qui dispose du tout par un conseil qui meur
 Sauve tout un public des griffes du malheur.

Pense-tu, Scipion, que ta masle vaillance
 Puisse voir les Romains estre un jour en creance ?
 Pense-tu commander à ce peuple mutin,
 Bien que tu face loy au rigoureux destin ?
 Pense-tu qu'il te croye et cruel à ta gloire,
 Qu'il te laisse jouir des fruits de ta victoire,
 Qu'il me sauve par toy et qu'il ne vueille pas
 Un jour en sa fureur me trainer au trespas ?
 « Tu ne dois le penser, car l'utile service
 « Que l'on rend à un peuple ennemy de justice,
 « S'abisme parmy luy et s'y perd consommé,

Nor by honor, nor by right, but rather by violence
 Which does not receive from the bit^{lxiv} the ardor that drives it,
 But much like the boatman, aboard his ship
 Coursing over the sea, does not master the furious waves
 Agitated by the wind that controls them,
 And which insolently stirs up their proud rage.
 Thus, no one can be seen as sufficiently strong
 To curb the daring power of a people,
 Arrogant, impudent, that does not bridle
 That fierce fury that madly directs it.
 More just, more courteous, and a thousand times softer
 To oppressed mortals is the empire of kings,
 For it is not opposed by the arrogant band
 Of spirited mutineers, since there is only one who controls
 there,
 Disposing of everything by a dying council,
 And it is he who saves all the people from the claws of
 misfortune.
 Do you think, Scipio, that your manly valor
 Can see Romans one day indebted?
 Do you think to govern this mutinous people,
 Although you create law with harsh power?
 Do you think that they believe you and, cruel in your glory,
 That they allow you to enjoy the fruits of your victory,
 That they may save me through you and that they do not wish
 One day in his fury to drag me to death?
 "You must not think so, for the useful service
 "That one renders to a people, enemy to justice,

« Comme dans l’océan un navire abîmé,
 Dont il ne rest pas la trace vagabonde,
 Après qu’il a coulé sous l’espaisseur de l’onde.
 De mesme, Scipion, un public ignorant
 Qui va nostre service, inhumain, devorant
 N’a plus de souvenir de maint service antique
 Que nostre alme vertu fist à sa republique.
 Tant seulement alors qu’il le sent et le voit
 Pour un plaisir parfait, cet ingrat le cognoit.
 Aussi ne veux-je point en ma cruelle peine
 Esperer du secours de la tourbe Romaine.
 Si j’en puis esperer, je l’espere de toy
 Dont comme la valeur, vive je tiens la foy.
 Mais, ô cher Scipion, si quelquefois ta dextre
 Eut desir aux vaincus de courtoise paroistre,
 Que je l’esprove telle, et me fais à ce jour
 Gouster les fruits sacrez de ton fidelle amour,
 Permettant à ma main au malheur asservie,
 De trancher le filet de ma cruelle vie.
 Ah, laisse-moi mourir ! C’est paroistre trop fort
 Immortel ennemy qu’envier nostre mort,
 Puisque c’est le salut des pauvres miserables
 Qui servent de jouët aux destins implacables.

SCIPION

Non, tu ne mourras pas pour^l n’estreindre en tes
 Le salutaire effet de mon heureux secours. [jours
 Je veux que tu demeure, afin que ma promesse,
 En te rendant heureux, immortelle paroisse.

“Casts itself into the abyss and, devoured, is lost,
 “Like a ship swallowed up on the ocean,
 Of which there remains no broken waves,
 After it sank under the thickness of the wave.
 Similarly, Scipio, an ignorant public
 That goes about, cruelly devouring
 No longer remembers our many ancient deeds
 That our nourishing virtue made to its republic.
 Only when they see and feel it
 For perfect pleasure, does this ingrate know it.
 Thus I do not want, in my cruel pain,
 To hope to be rescued from the Roman rabble.
 If I can so hope, I place my hope in you
 Whose faith I hold alive as I do valor.
 But, oh dear Scipio, if sometimes your strong arm
 Desired to appear graciously to the vanquished,
 May I experience it, and make me this day
 Taste the sacred fruits of your faithful love,
 Allowing my hand subjected to misfortune,
 To cut the thread of my cruel life.
 Ah, let me die! Too strong an immortal enemy
 Appears that longs for our death,
 Since it is the salvation of poor wretches
 Who serve as toys to relentless fate.

SCIPIO

No, you will not die so as to extinguish in your days
 The healing effect of my happy relief.
 I want you to remain, so that my promise,

« Siphax, demeure donc ; les immortels parfaits
« Nous peuvent relever comme ils nous ont défaits.

SIPHAX

Les dieux n'ont plus souci de mon bien miserable,
Puisqu'ils m'ont fait butin d'un peuple inexorable.
C'est un malheur sans pair ; les rois de l'univers
N'ont d'ennemis formez que le peuple divers.
Ah, laisse-moy mourir !

SCIPION

La mort n'est nécessaire

Qu'à celui qui vivant aucun secours n'espere,
Non aux rois comme toy qui doyvent espere
De se revoir encor quelque jour honorer.

SIPHAX

« Aux rois infortunez la mort est secourable.
« Il n'est point de trespas qui ne soit honorable
« Quand brave l'on l'endure, et le trespas loyal
« Ravive nostre los et destruit nostre mal.

SCIPION

Ce bien que de la mort si courtois tu espere
Te peut tousjours tirer de mortelle misere,
^{li}Mais non remettre en vie excellente en bonheur,
Comme le temps qui peut surmonter ton malheur.^{lii}

[SIPHAX]

Ne parlons plus de vivre à une ame asservie
Qui vivant suit la mort et en mourant la vie,
A qui le jour ^{liiii}deplaist et pour divin flambeau

In making you happy, appears everlasting.

"Therefore stay, Siphax; perfect immortals

"Can raise us up as just as they have defeated us.

SIPHAX

The gods have no concern for my miserable life,
Since they have made me the plunder of an unrelenting people.
It is a misfortune without compare; kings of the universe
Do not make enemies formed from diverse people.
Ah, let me die!

SCIPIO

Death is not necessary

To him who, living, does not hope for any relief,
Not to kings like you who require hope
Of seeing themselves honored one day.

SIPHAX

"To unfortunate kings, death is a reprieve.
"It is not death that lacks honor
"When one bravely endures it, and loyal death
"Revives our praise and destroys our evil.

SCIPIO

This reprieve that you hope from such a gentle death
Can always draw you away from mortal misery,
But it cannot bring you happiness in an excellent life,
Like time which can overcome your misfortune.

SIPHAX

Let us speak no more of living as an enslaved soul
Which living follows death, and in dying follows life,

Cherche l'obscurité d'un sepulcral tombeau.

SCIPION

Qui si fiere en ton cœur ceste creance imprime ?

SIPHAX

Le desir de mourir impolu de tout crime.

SCIPION

Pense-tu qu'en la mort meure nostre forfait ?

SIPHAX

La parque nostre honneur demy-ruiné refait.

SCIPION

La mort n'est à priser qu'au combat honorable.

SIPHAX

Il n'est de libre mort qui ne soit venerable.

SCIPION

Quoy, mourir sans sujet ? C'est estre sans raison.

SIPHAX

Douce est la mort qui met nos corps hors de prison.

SCIPION

Qui te l'a fait aimer ?

SIPHAX

L'amitié que je porte

A mon antique gloire, en vivant^{liv} qui gist morte.

SCIPION

Pense-tu recevoir pour mourir de l'honneur ?

SIPHAX

La mort libre tesmoigne en nous un brave cœur.

SCIPION

Which is displeased by day, and by a divine torch

Seeks the darkness of a burial tomb.

SCIPIO

Who imprints this belief so proudly in your heart?

SIPHAX

The desire to die untainted of any crime.

SCIPIO

Do you think that our sins die in death?

SIPHAX

Fate recreates our half-ruined honor.

SCIPIO

Death is not to be esteemed, except in combat.

SIPHAX

He is not exempt from a death that lacks veneration.

SCIPIO

What, to die without cause? That does not stand to reason.

SIPHAX

Sweet is the death that keeps our bodies out of prison.

SCIPIO

Who made you love her?

SIPHAX

The love that I carry

Bears my ancient glory, while I live on my deathbed.

SCIPIO

Do you think you will receive honor by dying?

SIPHAX

A death taken freely testifies to a brave heart in us.

Plustost elle fait voir nostre foible inconstance.

SIPHAX

Eviter son malheur, n'est-ce acte de prudence ?

SCIPION

Quel mal evite-tu en mourant par ta main ?

SIPHAX

L'insupportable joug de l'empire Romain.

SCIPION

Rome tu trouveras plus douce que cruelle.

SIPHAX

Qu'ai-je affaire d'attendre un tel secours par elle

Si je puis le trouver en la courtoise mort ?

SCIPION

Pour te voir retourner en ton antique sort.

SIPHAX

D'un chose impossible, incroyable est l'attente.

SCIPION

Toute chose est possible à celui qui l'attente.

SIPHAX

Faillant à son effet, double mal on ressent.

SCIPION

C'est le dire d'un cœur et foible et languissant.

SIPHAX

Plustost d'un sage esprit le dire veritable.

SCIPION

L'on se rend quelquefois soy-mesme miserable

Plustost par un erreur que par la verité.

SCIPIO

Rather it shows our feeble fickleness.

SIPHAX

To avoid misfortune, is this not an act of prudence?

SCIPIO

What evil are you avoiding in dying by your own hand?

SIPHAX

The unbearable yoke of the Roman empire.

SCIPIO

You will find Rome more sweet than cruel.

SIPHAX

What business do I have in expecting such a rescue by her

If I find it in gentle death?

SCIPIO

To see yourself return to your ancient fate.

SIPHAX

An impossible thing, incredible is the wait.

SCIPIO

Every good thing comes to those who wait.

SIPHAX

If this does not come about, we will feel double the evil.

SCIPIO

So it is said of a weak and languishing heart.

SIPHAX

Rather it is said truly to be of a noble soul.

SCIPIO

One sometimes makes oneself miserable

Through error, rather than by truth.

SIPHAX

Non fait, quand on ressent du mal la cruauté.

SCIPION

lvEt quel mal si cruel du bien te desespere ?

SIPHAX

Le peu d'espoir de voir la fin de ma misere.

SCIPION

Es-tu le premier roy que le sort a perdu,
Et que le mesme sort bienheureux a rendu ?

SIPHAX

La valeur de Jupin à chacun n'est commune.

SCIPION

Des rois on voit souvent pareille la fortune.

SIPHAX

Ha, je ne suis plus roy ains esclave transi.

SCIPION

J'auray de te remettre en ton estat souci.

SIPHAX

Rome ne l'aura pas que tu as pour maistresse.

SCIPION

Rome ne voudra pas violer ma promesse.

SIPHAX

Qui nous peut assurer d'un public incertain ?

SCIPION

Le secours de cetuy dont la puissante main

A le mesme public conservé de misere.

SIPHAX

Not so, when one feels the cruelty of evil.

SCIPIO

And what evil is so cruel that would cause you to despair in the
goodness of the world?

SIPHAX

There is little hope in seeing the end of my misery.

SCIPIO

Are you the first king whom fortune has lost,
And whom the same fortune has made blessed?

SIPHAX

The valor of Jupiter is not shared by everybody.

SCIPIO

Kings have often known such fortune.

SIPHAX

Ha, I am no longer king, but rather a deadened slave.

SCIPIO

I will take care to restore you to your station.

SIPHAX

Rome will not allow you to have her as your mistress.

SCIPIO

Rome will not want to violate my promise.

SIPHAX

Who can assure us in the face of a volatile people?

SCIPIO

The help of him whose mighty hand

Has spared this very people from misery.

SIPHAX

D'un peuple furieux la tourbe temeraire
Ne reconnoit ny loy, ny plaisir, ny bienfait.

SCIPION

Il n'est peuple si fol et sujet au forfait
Qui ne sente le bien qui conserve son aise.

SIPHAX

C'est alors seulement qu'il transist en malaise,
Car avecque le mal il perd le souvenir
Du plaisir qui l'a fait heureux redevenir.

SCIPION

Demandant ton estat, ta vie, et ta personne,
Je ne demande rien que le droit ne m'ordonne.

SIPHAX

Ce que vous conquetez au public appartient,
Et sur les prisonniers tout pouvoir il retient.

SCIPION

Le public qui par nous reçoit ceste puissance
Ne nous refuse pas d'une juste licence
De faire du plaisir à l'ennemy domté.

SIPHAX

Ce fait vient seulement de seule volonté,
^{lvi}Non qu'il soit ordinaire et vif en assurance.

SCIPION

Il faut tousjours avoir en son mal esperance.

SIPHAX

Mais craindre le destin qui suit le malheureux.

SIPHAX

The rash rabble of a furious people
Recognizes neither law, nor pleasure, nor goodness.

SCIPIO

There is not a people so mad and subject to misdeed
That does not feel the good that retains its pleasure.

SIPHAX

It is only then that they die diseased,
For with the evil, they lose the memory
Of pleasure that made them become happy again.

SCIPIO

Questioning your nature, your life, and your being,
I question nothing about what the law does not demand of me.

SIPHAX

What you conquer belongs to the people,
And it retains all power over prisoners.

SCIPIO

The people who receive this power from us
Do not deny us, with rightful freedom,
To find pleasure in a subdued enemy.

SIPHAX

This fact derives solely from a single desire,
And not because it is plain and evident in meaning.

SCIPIO

There must always be hope in its wrong.

SIPHAX

But fearing fate which follows the unfortunate.

SCIPIO

Comme l'on n'est toujours en vivant bienheureux,
L'on n'est toujours aussi chetif et miserable.

SIPHAX

L'on ne ressent jamais aucun bien secourable
Quand vivan[t]^{lvii} en malheur, on craint un autre mal.

SCIPIO

Il n'est point de malheur qui fierement fatal
Soit toujours attaché à nostre courte vie.

SIPHAX

Si est : quand la douleur la tient toute asservie.
Scipion, si jamais ton esprit invaincu
A paru debonnaire apres avoir vaincu,
Si tu sçais par douceur les natures combatre,

Comme par la valeur les droits sacrez debatre
De Rome ambitieuse, ô Scipion, fais-moy
Plustost mourir que vivre en languissant esmoy.
Qu'on ne me traine point en triomphe dans Rome,
Et que serf des Romains la terre ne me nomme,
Car j'aime mieux mourir et par ma propre main,
En me tuant, finir ce desastre inhumain.

SCIPIO

J'en feray mon devoir ; l'effet te fera croire
Combien de mon serment j'honore la memoire.

[*Curtius, Sophonisbe*]

CURTIUS

O royne à qui le sort, non le deffaut de cœur,

SCIPIO

As one is not always blessed to be living,
One is also not always wretched and miserable.

SIPHAX

One never feels any good in helping others
When, living in misery, one fears another evil.

SCIPIO

There is no misfortune which, fiercely fatal,
Always appears attached to our short life.

SIPHAX

If so: when pain holds all enslaved.
Scipio, if ever your unconquered spirit
Appeared affable after defeating,
If you know how to battle human dispositions through
gentleness,
Like debating through valor the sacred rights,
Ambitious Rome, oh Scipio, make me
Die rather than live in languishing sorrow.
May one not parade me in triumph in Rome,
And may the land of the Romans not name me a slave,
For I prefer to die by my own hand,
And in killing myself, end this cruel calamity.

SCIPIO

I will do my duty; the result will make you believe
How, by my oath, I honor the past.

[*Curtius, Sophonisba*]

CURTIUS

Oh queen, to whom fate, not lack of courage,

Procure indignement le menaçant malheur
 Qui traverse ton ame et te fait miserable,
 Bien que rien ne te soit en constance semblable,
 Massinisse, qui veut en te gardant la foy,
 Parmy son cruel mal avoir pitié de toy,
 Qui veut te faire voir fidelle sa promesse
^{lviii}Et le cours estanché de ta vive destresse,
 Qui ne veut endurer te voir dessous les mains,

Esclave indignement, des superbes Romains,
 Qui cherche ton repos et jaloux de ta gloire,
 Veut te faire emporter du malheur la victoire,
 Te donne ce présent qui te doit retirer
 Du joug injurieux et ta gloire assurer.
 Jadis il te promist d'un genereux courage
 De garantir tes ans de l'infame servage,
 Et de ne souffrir pas qu'un cruel estranger
 En triomphant de toy, de toy se peut vanger.
 Il a fait son devoir vers la Romaine audace
 Pour vives conserver les beautez de ta face,
 Pour assurer ta vie exempte des tourmens
 Dont le joug impiteux accourcist nos beaux ans.
 Il n'a peu obtenir de Rome qui dispose

De tout à son vouloir ceste equitable chose.
 Scipion n'a voulu luy permectre ce bien,
 Bien qu'il soit son amy fidelle et antien.^{lix}
 Au defaut de cet heur, ce don il te presente

Indignantly procures menacing misfortune
 Which runs through your soul and makes you miserable,
 Although nothing is similar to you in constant misery,
 Massinissa, who, in keeping faith in you,
 Wants to pity you through his cruel evil,
 Who wants to show you the truth of his promise
 And to quench the course of your acute distress,
 Who does not want to see you, indignant slave, suffer under his
 hands,
 Of the haughty Romans,
 Who seeks your rest and, jealous of your glory,
 Wants to have you taken away from the victory of misfortune
 Who gives you this offer in which you must throw off
 The offensive yoke and to assure your glory.
 Once, he promised you, with noble spirit,
 To protect your years from shameful enslavement,
 And not to suffer a cruel foreigner
 Triumphant over you, and to be able to avenge yourself.
 He did his duty against Roman audacity
 To preserve the gleaming graces of your face,
 And to keep your life free from torments,
 Whose savage yoke shortens our beautiful years.
 He can scarcely obtain that fair thing from Rome, which
 bestows
 Everything according to its desires.
 Scipio did not want to permit him this gift,
 Although he was his faithful and ancient friend.
 In place of this happiness, he gives you this gift

Qui peut faire mourir ta peine languissante,
 Appaiser ta douleur et deslier tes mains
 Du servage inhumain des superbes Romains.
 Royne, reçois ce don et d'un masle courage
 Propice à ta douleur eschape à ton servage,
 Puisque l'estat des rois est mourir indomtez,
 Plustost que de se voir en servage arrestez,
 Et que^{lx} cent fois la mort nous est plus debonnaire
 Que le joug inhumain d'un cruel adversaire,
 Puisqu'on meurt mille fois quand on tient du secours
 D'un barbare ennemy le reste de ses jours.

SOPHONISBE

O present agreable, ô douce medecine
 Qui guaris ma douleur et refais ma ruine !
 O delectable don, ô flambeau gracieux
 Qui chasse la frayeur d'alentour de mes yeux.
 O joyau pitoyable en qui mon bien repose,
 Heureux d'estre envoyé par celuy qui dispose
 De mon heureuse vie ! O delectable don !
 De mes maux endurez je te tiens à guerdon.
 Je t'aime, je t'honore et benis à grand joye
 L'inseparable amour de celuy qui t'envoye,
 De mon cher Massinisse, en qui vive je voy

 A mon sacré repos la bienheureuse foy.
 O vaillant Massinisse, ô roy dont le courage
 A plustost consenti ma mort que mon servage !
 O prince valeureux, à ta fidelité

That can kill your languishing pain,
 That can soothe your sorrow, and that can unbind your hands
 From the savage servitude of the haughty Romans.
 Queen, receive this gift and, with a manly bravery
 Suitable to your pain, escape from your servitude,
 Since the state of tyrants is to die untamed
 Rather than to be seen arrested and enslaved,
 And since death is one hundred times sweeter to us
 Than the beastly yoke of a cruel enemy,
 Since we die a thousand times when we take shelter
 From a barbarous enemy for the rest of our days.

SOPHONISBA

Oh present pleasure, oh sweet medicine,
 You who cure my pain and renew my destruction!
 Oh delectable gift, oh gracious torch
 That chases the fear from all around my eyes.
 Oh pitiful gem where my wellbeing resides,
 Happy to be delivered by him who bestows upon me
 My happy life! Oh great gift!
 For my pains that I have endured, I must reward you.
 I love you, honor you, and bless with great happiness
 The inseparable love of him who sends you,
 Of my dear Massinissa, in whom I clearly see, in my sacred
 slumber,
 Blessed faith.
 Oh valiant Massinissa, oh king whose courage
 Consented to my death rather than to my enslavement!
 Oh valorous prince, in your faithfulness

Je rens les vœux sacrez et de ma liberté
 Et de mon cher repos, puisque ma peine cesse
 En la mort qui transist ma cruelle destresse.
 Si autrefois j'aymé ta guerriere valeur
 Comme douce et propice à mon cruel malheur,
 Si j'honoré tes ans comme dignes de gloire
 Pour avoir emporté mainte riche victoire,
 Et si j'aimé ton front et l'esclat de tes yeux
 Qui lançoient dessus moy leurs traits victorieux,
 Ores je les honore et d'une ardeur extreme,
 Vive de passion vivement je les aime.
 Tu pris soin de mes jours lorsque tu fus vainqueur
 De Siphax qui par moy est butin de malheur.
 Tu me voulus sauver et recevoir à femme,
 Asseurant du peril les frayeurs de mon ame.
 Tu voulus empescher mon bien d'estre mortel.
 Ores tu garde encor mon honneur immortel ;
 Tu garde mon repos et ne permets fidelle
 Que je sente du joug la rigueur immortelle.
 O vaillant Massinisse, ô digne d'estre roy,
 Puisque tu sçais garder immortelle ta foy,
 Digne de commander à la superbe terre,
 Puisque tu vis fidelle et en paix et en guerre !
 Or sus, il faut mourir ; faut eviter au sort
 Par le secours heureux de la propice mort.
 Faut fuir au malheur qui superbe m'attaque,
 En courant promptement vers la fidelle parque.
 Faut enfermer dedans un propice cercueil

I give you the sacred vows of my freedom
 And of my dear rest, since my pain ceases
 In death, which numbs my cruel distress.
 If once I loved your warlike valor,
 So sweet and fair to my wretched misfortune,
 If I honored your years as worthy of glory
 To have won many a rich victory,
 And if I loved your forehead and the sparkle of your eyes,
 Which covered me in their winning shafts,
 Now do I honor them, and with a zealous devotion,
 With a burning passion do I deeply love them.
 You took care of my days when you vanquished
 Siphax, who by me became loathsome booty.
 You wanted to save me and receive me as a wife,
 Protecting my soul from its perilous fears.
 You wanted to prevent my well being from being mortal.
 Now you guard once more my immortal honor;
 You protect my rest and faithfully do not allow
 Me to feel the yoke of unending tribulation.
 Oh valiant Massinssa, oh worthy are you to be king,
 Since you know to shield your faith forever,
 Worthy of commanding throughout the beautiful earth,
 Since you live faithfully in both peace and in war!
 Well now, you must die; you must dodge fate
 For the happy relief of an opportune death.
 You must flee misfortune which arrogantly attacks me,
 Running quickly towards the faithful fate.
 You must be enclosed in a suitable coffin

Avec mon corps transi, mon malheur et mon dueil
 Et priver les Romains de l'injuste esperance
 Qu'ils eurent de me voir serve de leur puissance.
 Il le faut, il le faut; ô roine, tu le peux,
 Et des cruels vainqueurs ton bras victorieux
 Doit triompher ce jour, leur ravissant la gloire
 D'avoir eu furieux dessus toy la victoire.
 Tu cognoistras ce jour, Massinisse indomté,
 Que royne je nasquis, que royne ayant esté
 Tout le temps de mes jours, encores je meurs roine.
 Malgré le sort cruel qui au trespas me meine,
 Royne donc je me tiens, digne d'avoir d'un roy
 Fidelle l'amitié et durable la foy,
 Immuable l'amour, et ma tombe fatale^{lx}
 Ne fera point de honte à la grandeur royale.
 Sophonisbe, qui vient du sang royal de ceux
 Qui regirent l'Affrique et qui mourant comme eux
 Pour deffendre l'honneur de leur patrie aimée,
 Est digne comme ils sont de se voir estimée,
 Pleine d'honneur, de los, et dont la sainte fin
 Couronne ses beaux faits d'un los sacré divin.
 Or sus, dispose-toy, ô royne courageuse,
 De marcher au devant de la mort furieuse !
 Prepare au noir tombeau ce corps qui glorieux
 Surmonte par sa mort le sort ambitieux,
 La douleur, le meschef et d'un brave courage,
 Effroyable aux Romains, avale ce bre[u]vage^{lxii}
 Qui guarira ton mal et fera trespasser

With my lifeless body, my misfortune, and my mourning,
 And you must deprive the Romans of the unjust hope
 That they had of seeing me a slave of their power.
 It is necessary, it is necessary; oh queen, you can do so,
 And, you, victorious over cruel conquerors,
 Must triumph on this day, snatching from them the glory
 Of having furiously known victory over you.
 You will know this day, indomitable Massinissa,
 That I was born queen, that having been queen
 All the days of my life, I die, still queen.
 In spite of the cruel fate which leads me to death,
 Queen so I stand, worthy of having
 The true friendship and lasting faith of a king,
 Unchanging love, and my destined tomb
 Will not bring shame to royal grandeur.
 Sophonisba, who comes from the royal blood of those
 Who rule Africa and who, dying like them
 To defend the honor of their beloved homeland,
 Is worthy as they are to see herself esteemed,
 Full of honor, praise, and whose saintly end
 Crowns her beautiful deeds with sacred and divine praise.
 Well now, prepare yourself, oh courageous queen,
 To walk before raging death!
 Prepare for the murky tomb this body which, gloriously
 Overcomes through her death, greedy fate,
 Pain, distress, and, with a brave heart,
 Frightful to the Romans, swallows this potion
 Which will heal your sickness and will kill

Tous ceux qui ont voulu ton repos offencer.

All those who wanted to disturb your peace.

Va donc, royne, va donc chercher dessous la lame

Therefore, go, queen, go search beneath the falling blade

L'honneur de ta vertu et le bien de ton ame.

The honor of your virtue and the goodness of your soul.

- ⁱ Que: sauf
- ⁱⁱ elle: elle-même (la mémoire). Cf. v. 1994
- ⁱⁱⁱ Probable syntax: "Que toy qui fus.../Compagnon des Romains [que] parmy eux on estime.
- ^{iv} On the manners of General Demetrius, Plutarch writes: "...He was always unashamedly surrounding himself with several courtesans and other married women, which he used: and was blamed to be, more than any other prince or king of his time, subject to this vice and pleasure." (Démétrius, VIII, 210).
- ^v After a victory over the Trojans, Briseis was given to Achilles but Agamemnon took her. Achilles, furious, withdrew for a long time before the battle of Troy. (*The Iliad*, I).
- ^{vi} Having fallen in love with Polyxena, daughter of the king of Troy, Achilles demanded to marry her. When he arrived at the temple to celebrate their union, he was killed by the Greeks. (See Hyginus, fable 110).
- ^{vii} For seizing and raping Cassandra at the capture of Troy, Ajax incited the wrath of Athena, who tried to drown him. When Ajax proclaimed that no god could succeed [in killing him], Poseidon drowned him while at sea. (*The Odyssey*, IV).
- ^{viii} "But Alexander believing, in my opinion, to be the most royal being, controlled himself, so that to overcome his enemies, the daughters of Darius touched neither themselves, nor any other girl or woman, before marrying him." (Plutarch, "Alexander the Great," VII, 56).
- ^{ix} à: par
- ^x Helen: The famous wife of Menelaus, whose abduction by Paris sparked the Trojan War.
- ^{xi} forcé: The text gives *force* (coquille)
- ^{xii} Read: Luy veux-tu donner plus de vive autorité.
- ^{xiii} The meaning of this verse seems to be that if it is possible to blame Scipio for not having supported the right of Rome, he is ready for the most violent death.
- ^{xiv} plus: la plus
- ^{xv} ses: de la patrie.
- ^{xvi} sa: de la patrie.
- ^{xvii} son: de la patrie.
- ^{xviii} son: de la patrie.
- ^{xix} ayans: se raporte à nous (v. 1860)
- ^{xx} de nous: par nous.
- ^{xxi} Que: Puisque.
- ^{xxii} servir de fable: Common of the time. See Ronsard, *La Franciade* (La Pléiade edition, I, 729; Jacque de la Taille, *Daire* (Paris, 1573), f. 4r; Chrétien des Croix, *Amnon* (Rouen, 1608), p. 74.
- ^{xxiii} Pour avoir: Parce qu'elle a.
- ^{xxiv} Triompher: The text gives *trompher*.
- ^{xxv} Read: [Et] ses fers cruels [entortiller] tes pieds.
- ^{xxvi} Read: Tu le verra, Siphax, et [en] le voyant, [tu verras] tes jours.
- ^{xxvii} Read: Ou [pour] la mort. Cf. v. 1901.
- ^{xxviii} Read: privez [de l'empire].
- ^{xxix} Et qui: qui se réfère au vivre asservi.
- ^{xxx} du: par le.
- ^{xxxi} Read: afin de n'estre point, [en tant qu']un vaincu, cruellement contraint d'implorer.
- ^{xxxii} Common in a tragedy. The fallen character attributes his misfortune to the fact that the gods (the cruel sister = Fate) are jealous of the happiness of mortals. Cf. v. 92 and La Taille, *Saül le Furieux*, v. 796; Jodelle, *Didon se sacrifiant*, v. 5; Garnier, *Hippolyte*, vv. 2225-6.
- ^{xxxiii} pour vous ressembler: parce qu'il vous ressemblent.
- ^{xxxiv} Jupiter refers to the Roman god of sky and thunder, who is also typically the king of the gods. Also known as Jove.
- ^{xxxv} leur: à eux (Br. 419).
- ^{xxxvi} Pour ne voir: Afin que vous ne voyiez pas.
- ^{xxxvii} Read: ce fer qui te reste [comme la seule] marque de ton pouvoir.
- ^{xxxviii} de: par.
- ^{xxxix} plus: le plus.
- ^{xl} pour n'avoir pas: parce qu'ils n'ont pas.
- ^{xli} Read: [Et] comme victorieux.
- ^{xlii} que: puisque.
- ^{xliii} seulement: seul.
- ^{xliv} Read: Qui n'est [pas] forcé par le sort, puisqu'il a [la] resistance/Que l'on fait au Malheur, nous dispence du joug du sort.
- ^{xlv} pour porter: parce que tu portes.
- ^{xlvi} Que: "The "que" of subordination can repeat when, in the subordination, the complements precede the subject of the verb." (G. Gougenheim, *Grammaire de la Langue française du Seizième Siècle*, Paris, Picard, 1974, p. 149).
- ^{xlvii} luy: lui-même.
- ^{xlviii} de fureur: à cause de la fureur.
- ^{xlxi} du: par le.
- ^l pour: afin de.
- ^{li} Read: Mais non [pas te] remettre.
- ^{lii} The reply that follows this verse is attributed in the text to Scipio.

liii Read: *deplaist*, et [qui] pour divin flambeau.

liv en vivant: pendant que je vis. Cf. v. 2342.

lv Read: "te [fait tout espoir du bien]." On the use of the verb *desesperer*, see huguet under *désespéré de*.

lvi Read: [Et] non [pas du fait] qu'il soit ordinaire.

lvii vivant: The text gives *vivans*, spelling reserved for present participles referring to a noun in the plural.

lviii Read: Et le cours de ta vive destresse estanché.

lix antien: ancien.

lx que: puisque.

lxi *Tombe* is ambiguous; It could mean either "tomb" or "fall."

lxii breuvage: The text gives *brevage*.

lxiii Context suggests this to be an aside.

lxiv "Bit" refers to the rod placed in the mouth of a horse that it may be lead by reins.